AM
1916
b

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

THE FORCES BEHIND THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA BILL.

Submitted by

HOWARD BOTTOMLEY

(A. B. Boston University 1915)

In partial fulfillment of requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts

1916

To

E. H. M.

ANALYSIS.

I. Introduction.

A. Thirty-third Congress assembled December 5, 1853.

B. The tranquil condition of politics due to the slavery compromises which had settled the status of slavery in all the Territories.

II. The Kansas-Nebraska Bill in Congress, Dec. 1853--May 1854.

A. The Dodge Bill in the Senate referred to Committee on Territories.

B. Previous attempts to organize Nebraska.

1) The Richardson Bill of the last session defeated by the opposition of all the Southerners except Atchison of Missouri.

C. Senator Douglas reported from Committee a substitute for the Dodge Bill containing the indirect repeal.

D. Senator Dixon proposed amendment stating the direct repeal.

E. Douglas yeilded to pressure to incoporate this in his bill and secured its passage in the Senate.

F. Richardson of Illinois forces the bill thru the House.

III. The importance of the Bill: lies in the fact that it set in motion a chain of events which lead directly to Civil War.

A. Therefore the question of its authorship and the motives behind it is important.

B. This question is unusually complex because of lack of evidence and conflicting views.

IV. The Views of modern historians about this problem.

A;J.F.Rhodes regards the bill as a bid by Douglas for Southern support for the Presidential nomination of 1856.

1) The political situation in the Democratic ranks bears out this conclusion.

2) The exact relationship of Atchison and Douglas is uncertain.

B. Professor T.C.Smith declares the bill was the work of Douglas alone and that his motive was political ambition.

C. Allen Johnson admis that Douglas was ambitious, that the slavery extension party was agressive, that Missouri politics entered the question, but insists that the introduction of the bill, the repeal clause, and the division of the territory, were all handled by Douglas to aid the building of a Pacific Railroad.

V. Review of Special Theses.

A. Mrs.Dixon fails to substantiate her claim that Douglas motive was pure patriotism; but she establishes beyond dispute two facts; that--

1) Dixon proposed the amendment on his own initiative.

2) The tale about Sumner's agency in the matter is without foundation.

B. The generally accepted view,--that the Bill was a bid for the Southern votes in the coming Presidential race, has much support.

1) A formidible list of authorities have accepted it.

2) External circumstances bear it out.

3) Douglas'character and his political faith contains much to support the idea.

4) The doctrine of "popular sovereignty."

C. P.O.Ray argues that Atchison was the originator of the repeal and that he urged it on Douglas. He supports his view as follows:

1) The Missouri Democracy had divided its support for the Senatorshop between Sen. Atchison, who favored the Repeal and Col. Benton who opposed it. Atchison saw that his political salvation depended on forcing the question forward in the Thirty-third Congress.Benton, to embarrass Atchison, linked the Pacific Railroad and the repeal together in his agitation and as a result reawakened a demand for organization among the Indians and the Iowans. These three factors made the reappearance of the question in the next Congress inevitable.

2) Douglas had shown no concern about Nebraska up to 1853 and gave no hint now that the idea of Repeal was on his mind.

3) In support of Atchison's claim that he forced the repeal on Douglas, we have as indirect evidence:

a.Newspapers assume this question is the result of the Missouri squabble.

b.Douglas and Atchison were close friends.

c.Atchison took an active part aiding D. to handle the Bill.

d.Douglas had excellent reasons to accept the proposal.

4) In support of Atchison's claim we have as direct evidence:

a.A statement by Atchison and an unsatisfactory denial by Douglas.

b.Statement by Col. Parker that A. and three others were the originators of the Act.

c. Statement by Blair that Atchison, Mason, Hunter and Butler were the originators.

5) Conclusion;Ray proves his point in absence of further evidence.

D. Mr. Hodder, in opposition to Ray, claims that the main motive of Douglas was anxiety to secure a northern route to the Pacific Railroad.

1) Nothing novel in this view.

2) While admittedly a true account of the cause of the introduction of the Lodge Bill, it proves nothing about the passage of the Repeal.

3) No evidence is produced to back up a contradiction of Ray's contention.

4) The evidence produced to show Douglas' interest in the Railroad Project is extremely weak.

5) Conclusion; Hodder is supporting an untenable theory.

VI. An independent investigation of the bearing of the Pacific Railroad Project and the Kansas-Nebraska Act on each other has established the fact that there is no evidence of anything more direct than broad general relationships.

VII. Summary; the history of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in the light of the above investigation.

"Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes."

THE FORCES BEHIND THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA BILL.

The thirty third congress assembled for its first session, December 5, 1853. Every circumstance seemed to indicate a sucessful, harmonious period of legislation. The country was at peace; business was booming; unusual prosperity was keeping alive the spirit of enterprise; and the political situation was marked by a friendly tranquility. Best of all, the slavery question seemed settled by general acquiesence in the finality of the compromise measures of 1850. President Pierce in his message had said, "There has been restored a sense of repose and security to the public mind throughout the Confederacy. This repose is to suffer no shock during my official term, if I have power to avert it." Senator Douglas had remarked, "So long as our opponents do not agitate for repeal or modification why should we agitate for any purpose ? We claim that the Compromise of 1850 is a final settlement".# There was no federal tariff where the status of slavery was not fixed by some law like unto a compromise between the sections of the country, and both state and national government was controlled by a party pledged to executing these compromises.

Appendix, Congressional Globe 1851 - 2 p. 68.

All prophecy as to the chief business that would concern the new Congress, centered around two propositions, the Pacific Railroad project and the organization of Nebraska Territory.

Few prophets saw that there lay hidden in the second of these subjects the seed of dissension which was to change so radically this aspect of repose. Nine days after the opening of the session, Senator Dodge of Iowa introduced a bill to provide for the organization of Nebraska, the whole region between the parallels of 36° 30′ on the South and 43° 30′ on the North, Missouri and Iowa on the East and the Rocky Mountains on the West. This bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Territories, of which Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois was chairman.

This was by no means the first attempt at a territorial organization of the region. The earliest suggestion was in 1844 when the Secretary of War proposed the formation of Nebraska Terriory as a preliminary step to the extension of military posts west. In December 1844 doudlas had introduced into the House a bill for that purpose. Four years later, as a member of the Senate, he introduced a second and a third bill. In December 1852 Hall, a Representative from Missouri, a member of the Benton faction, brought in a

bill for organization, for which Chairman Richardson of the House Committee on Territories reported back a substitute. This passed the House on February 10, by a vote of 98 to 42, after a formidable and unexpected struggle. Douglas pressed the measure with great warmth in the Senate, but on the last day of the session it was refused consideration by a vote of 23 yo 17. The opposition came from the Southerners who, remembering that this was soil consecrated to freedom by the terms of the Missouri Compromise, were unwilling to foster an expansion in which they could not share. The Senators from Missouri were the only Southerners voting for the bill; and Atchison thought it necessary to explain that he rallied to its support only because he saw no hope of a repeal of the slavery prohibition and beleived that organization might as well come then as ten years later.

This Dodge Bill of 1853 was identical with the Richardson Bill of the Previous session and contained no mention of slavery. But on January 4, 1854, Mr. Douglas reported from the Committee# a substitute bill with the same provision in regard to slavery as that which had been inserted in the Utah and New Mexico bills, that is, that Nebraska should enter the Union

#"So far as affirmative legislation was concerned the Committee was Douglas." Rhodes I 425.

when it became a state, with or without slavery. The bill apparently left the existing prohibition of slavery undisturbed yet indirectly authorized the people of the territories to ignore it. This was unsatisfactory; and on the Sixteenth Senator Dixon of Kentucky gave notice of an amendment explicitly repealing the Missouri Compromise. Pressure was brought to bear on Douglas and after a conference with Dixon and with the President (January 22) he consented to incorporate the amendment. On Monday, January 23,Douglas reported his amendments, changing the Southern boundary from 36° 30′ to 37° 30′, providing for two Territories Kansas and Nebraska, instead of one, and declaring the Missouri Compromise inoperative on the ground that it had been superseded by the Compromise Measure of 1850. February 6, Douglas yeilded to objections and changed the words "superceded by" to "inconsistent with". The debate which began on January 30 and ended March 3, was one of the most desperate contests in the history of the Senate. After an all night session, the bill was passed, March 4, by a vote of 37 to 14.

A similar bill in the House did not regularly come up for consideration until May 8, but from February 14 to April 28 the general subject of Nebraska was discussed almost daily, regardless of the business nominally before the House. May 8,Richardson,Douglas'

lieutenant in the House, called up the Kansas-Nebraska bill, thirty bills and resolutions being successively laid aside to reach it. The contest in the House was engineered, as it had been in the Senate, by Douglas. A furious debate continued until May 22, when the bill passed the House by a vote of 113 to 100. The Senate concurred on May 26 and the President made the bill law by his signiture on the 30th.#

Such, in brief, is the legislative course of the bill which repealed the Missouri Compromise, and which aroused instant and general denunciation through-out the North, as being entirely uncalled for and also as a breach of plighted faith. Concerning its importance one historian writes: "It is safe to say that in scope and consequences, the Kansas- Nebraska Act was the most momentous measure that passed Congress from the day the senators and representatives first met to the outbreak of the Civil War. It sealed the doom of the Whig party; it caused the formation of the Republican party on the principle of no extension of slavery; it roused Lincoln and gave a bent to his great political ambition; it made the Fugitive Slave law a dead letter at the North, it lost the Democrats their hold on New

For a full account of the bill in Congress, see New York Times, Jan.3 to May 30 inclusive; also MacDonald "Select Documents"p.395; for the debates see Congressional Globe,Appendix 1st Session 33rd Congress.

England; it made the Northwest Republican; and it led to the downfall of the Democratic party." [7]

Such a train of consequences were not forseen by those responsible for the passage of the Act. It should, therefore, be profitable and interesting to seek for the forces and motives which were behind such an important piece of legislation. Seldom can landmarks of histoey be traced to a simple source, either to a single force or to a unitary motive. In this case our search becomes unusually complex because we are dealing with an event the full details of which seem to have been lost to history, and we have but "a faint and shadowy outline of isolated movements of a few of the chief actors." [#] If we examine the accounts given by three of the best modern authorities we shall get a clear idea of our historical problem.

The most widely accepted view of the question is set forth at length by Mr. J. F. Rhodes. [@] He says that the bill was introduced by Douglas as a bid for Southern support for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1856. He was ready for any exertion and sacrifice to win leadership. The Independant Democrats in Congress, Van Buren, and even Douglas' friends

---

[7] Rhodes, I p.490.
[@] Rhodes, "History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850" Vol 1, Chapter V (1893)
[#] Quoted from Nicolay and Hay, "Lincoln" p.334.

did not scruple to express the opinion. Indeed, the Illinois Senator himself gives a shuffling account of his motives and partly confesses the truth of this, when he assigns party loyalty as his reason, saying that "the party in the election of Pierce had consumed all its powder and therefore would have no more ammunition." His failure to gain the nomination in 1852 had shown Douglas that in thenext convention, assaured of the support of the West and assistance from New York, he would win out if the majority of the 117 southern votes were to come his way. One method was open to commend himself to favor, to organize the new territories in a manner satisfactory to the South. He therefore proposed his bill, without consultation with southern men. Atchison, while under the influence of liquor, claimed that he forced Douglas to report such a measure. Rhodes simply accepts Douglas' denial of this statement.# Between the Monday when Dixon offered his amendment and the day he drove with Douglas, the latter had resolved to take a further step, influenced by southern party men who argued

#The only other evidence he gives for his rejection of the Atchison version is on p. 432: In 1886 Jefferson Davis in a letter to a friend said:"So far as I know, Douglas and Atchison were never in such relation to one another as would cause D. to ask A.'s help in preparing the bill. I think Douglas originated it."---"Memoir of J. Davis" by his wife.

that it would not do to allow a measure so favorable to the South to be sponsored by a Whig. Reluctantly Douglas gave up his purposely ambigious proposition. Many beleived that what at last decided him to accept the Dixon amendment was the fear that Cass might do so and gain an advantage over him. Moreover the division of the territory into two parts in Douglas' amendments of the 23rd. was a concession to slavery. After previously scoffing at the idea of achison influence on Douglas in the introduction of the bill, Rhodes, speaking of this division, writes:# "A movement began in the fall of 1853 in Missouri to make Nebraska a slave territory. Atchison urged this view warmly. Coming to Washington on the opening of Congress, he felt that he had an aggressive sentiment behind him which demanded the repeal of the slavery restriction. Kansas was all Atchison and his fellow slave-holders wanted, and if the territory were divided it would be easier to manage. That this was all known to Southern Democrats and to Douglas is indisputable. The supporters of the Nebraska Bill came together so frequently in conference that all these features must have been well understood." Our author does not make clear his reasons for attributing to Douglas such a knowledge of Atchison's desires, such

#Rhodes, vol. I pp.439-440.

a yeilding to his demands, such frequent consultation with his coterie, just previous to January 23, and at the same time rejecting any possibility of the same just previous to January 4.

Professor Theodore C. Smith gives only a brief account of the Act# and accepts the same explanation of the motive without hinting at alternatives. "The measure which lead to a sharp reneval of the sectional struggle seems to have been at that time an undeniable political blunder. Nothing in the Richardson Bill of 1853 nor in the language of its supporters indicated that the idea that the prohibition of slavery in Nebraska by the Missouri Compromise was affected. Douglas appears to have introduced this singular and startling proposition entirely on his own motion and its purpose seems to have been nothing more or less than an effort on the part of a presidential candidate to secure favor in a quarter where he lacked popularity. Douglas was too thorough a Democrat in person and in feeling to be regarded with sympathy by the aristocratic South, and if he was to be sucessful in the Democratic National Convention in 1856, he saw that he must somehow gain Southern approbation. He undoubtedly thought that by applying the principle of non-intervention, so sucessful in allaying all discord

#"Parties and Slavery" Chapter VII pp.94-108.

since 1850, he could win the applause of the South, and retain the support of all conservatives of the North. His action was based on a total failure to comprehend the veiled sectionalism of the times and a still deeper inability to grasp the moral bearing of the anti-slavery feeling. At no time in all his relations with the slavery question did Douglas show any other criterion than that of immediate political sucess." We could wish that Dr. Smith had given his reasons for beleiving that the Illinois Senator introduced the bill "entirely on his own motion."

The most recent and the fullest general treatment of this question is given by Professor Allen Johnson# who differs in his conclusions from the historians we have just considered. We must examine Johnson's view at some length.

The organization of Nebraska was a hobby with Douglas. Southern slavery sentiment had defeated the bill of 1853. Moreover, the fate of Nebraska was connected with the agitation for a Pacific Railroad. Douglas was interested in a northern route from Chicago; Benton advocated a central route from St. Louis; and the South wanted a southern route. Organization of Nebraska would aid the first two. Indeed, Benton's persistent clamor for settlement was due to his "Great

#"Stephen A. Douglas"(1908) Chapter XI.

Central National Highway" scheme and his Missouri opponent was Senator Atchison. The vote on the Richardson Bill showed that the anxiety of the Missourians was less for the unprotected emmigrant than for the central railroad, while the South cared less for the Indian than for a southern route. As a result of the failure of Congress to act, in the summer of 1853 the Wyandot Indians set up a provisional government in the territory and soon after a struggle began between the Benton-Iowa faction and the Atchison faction for a delegate to Washington. The supporters of Atchison elected Thomas Johnson and the other side sent Hadley Johnson; thus the "two Johnsons" came to the national legislature.

Meantime, Atchison, who had spoken in favor of the Richardson Bill, again changed his mind and demanded the repeal of the Missouri Compromise--presumablybecause he, for some reason, now beleived it possible. Douglas had not considered either organization or repeal of the Missouri Compromise at this session, before the introduction of the Dodge Bill. He then, in committee,planned to make an apparent concession to the South on the point of slavery in order to overcome that opposition to the Organization, which alone would accomplish his real desire, open up a northern route to the Pacific. He neither desired

nor beleived that slavery wuold go into Nebraska. Although he was aware of the Missouri factional controversy and of Atchison's purpose, there seems to be no good grounds to doubt his denial that he brought the bill at the dictation of Atchison. Dixon, too, must have known of this squabble in Missouri, but seems to have acted on his own initiative in the matter of his amendment which defeated Douglas' attempt to nullify the Compromise by "subtle indirection". Reluctantly the Illinois Senator yeilded to pressure to incorporate the direct repeal in his bill. No doubt personal ambition played its part, but the most powerful consideration was a desire to unite the party on this great principle of non-intervention. His next move, the division of the district into two territories,was not a further concession to slave interests; again it was the shadow of the Pacific Railroad. In the last session of Congress, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs had been empowered to extinguish Indian titles to the lands west of both Missouri and Iowa. Now the Iowa delegate, H. Johnson, came to Douglas with the story that the Commissioner, being a friend to Senator Atchison, was hurrying negociations with the redskins west of Missouri and delaying the same with the tribes west of Iowa, because early possession of that land would give Missourians the first available route

for the Railroad. To safeguard Iowa interests, the territory should be divided; two territories meant an equal chance for both norhtern and central routes. Douglas, being a Representative of the Chicago interests, was won over by these considerations.

To sum up; Johnson acknowledges that Douglas was ambitious, thatMissouri politics were thriving at Washington, but insists that the introduction of the bill, the incorporation of the amendment containing the repeal, and the division of the territory, were really handled by Douglas to facilitate the building of a Railroad to the Pacific over a northern route.. We shall have occasion later to examine this conclusion more fully.

The foregoing review of the best recent general accounts of the event certainly shows how many different and conflicting schemes were inextricably interwoven with the plan to organize Nebraska. General agreement as to motives has not been reached because time has failed ant new and conclusive evidence which might enable us to settle with mathimatical precision the percent of weight each force had in this great transaction. It may be however, that a more extensive examination of these different views, and a setting of them side by side, will make it possible to reconcile some of the apparent inconsistencies, or at

least, to realize that no one interpretation embodies the whole truth.

Let us now turn our attention to those who have advocated at length the especial significance of some one force behind the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

The distinction of having written the largest number of pages about the topic belongs to Mrs. Archibald Dixon#. Her "True History of the Missouri Compromise and Its Repeal", covers the entire period between I820 and I854 and is mainly a rehash of secondary material liberally padded with interminable extracts from the Congressional "Globe" and other legislative and state documents. Mrs. Dixon is doubly partisan, as a Southern woman and as the wife of Senator Dixon of Kentucky, the author of the Amendment that bears his name. This work is dedicated to the"truth of history"and confesses to a definite aim,--to prove that "in regard to the Repeal, there was neither plot nor intrigue, nor motive for such, on the part of its author, Dixon,or its main advocate, Douglas; but that both were actuated by a high patriotic and imperative sense of right".@

As far as this claim is made for Senator Douglas , nothing in the book indicates that the writer

"True History of the Missouri Compromise and Its repeal" pp. 4I7-620. (I899).
@ Dixon,p.6I0.

had any acquaintance with the mant to enable her to know his character and motives, nor that she had any deep comprehension of the complex politics of the day such as would lead her to doubt that all men were as noble and unselfish as was her husband. Therefore, what is written about the motives of Douglas may be dropped from serious consideration.

From the mass of verbiage we do, however, gain several important facts. The author was her husband's private sacretary and was "intimately acquainted with his ideas and his feelings."# Dixon introduced his amendment entirely on his own initiative actuated by the firm belief in the principle of non-intervention, and by a sense of justice to his slave holding constituents. He said in the debate, "on the question of slavery, I know no Whiggery, I know no Democracy." In common with others, he had quickly detected the flaw in Douglas original bill which, it was intended to establish non-intervention, failed to remove the previous act of intervention. He determined to move the direct repeal. Moreover, he considered that it would be far more conducive to the peace to relegate the whole question of slavery to the territories. Douglas, who had protested immediately against this move, came to Dixon a few days la-

#Dixon, p.432.

-ter and proposed to incorporate the amendment in his bill. Dixon readily consented because he was concerned only with the passage of the measure and saw that it had a better chance sponsored by a Northern Democrat than by a Southern Whig. Dixon seems to have been actuated throughout this transaction solely by a conviction of right, and appears never to have questioned the motives of the Illinois Senator. Yet doubtless, even he would have smiled at the confident assertion of his faithful wife, "that conviction on the part of Douglas was forced upon him by the clear and able presentment to his mind by Mr. Dixon of the injustice and unfairness of the Missouri Compromise."#

In addition to establishing beyond controversy the fact that Dixon, in proposing his amendment and in surrendering its supervision, acted alone and from honest motive, Mrs. Dixon has conclusively refuted another tale as to the origin of the amendment.@ The story is so improbable that it is included only for the sake of completeness and because it has been reprinted several times.

"While the original Kansas-Nebraska bill was pending, William H. Seward approached his friend Mr. Archibald Dixon and proposed that he offer the Repeal,

Dixon, p.490.
@ Dixon, pp. 588---610.

and Dixon gave notice of his intention to do so. In vain Douglas remonstrated with him; he beleived, as all the Southern statesmen, that the Missouri Compromise ought to be repealed."# So Major Whitney tells the story and gives as proof a letter from Montgomery Blair saying that Seward, in relating the incident to him, gave as his motive a desire to bring the Republican Party to life. This letter was published after Seward's death in a biographical article written by Gideon Welles.

Mrs Dixon demolishes this theory. On the face of it, it is illogical, as Whitney narrates it. If Dixon and all the other Southern statesmen beleived that the Compromise ought to be repealed would they wait to fall in line at a mere suggestion from Seward? Besides putting against such a damaging confession repeated on circumstantial evidence,@ a written, absolute denial, the charge is improbable because: (1)Seward scarcely knew Dixon and was never his friend; (2)Dixon was a pro-slavery man and Seward

#"Life on the Circuit with Lincoln" by Henry C. Whitney. (1892) pp.380-381.

@Mrs. Dixon puts it this way; "I do not pretend to say that Mr. Seward said, what Mr. Welles said, that Mr. Blair said that Mr. Seward said; but I do say that Mr. Seward either said it or did not say it. If he did not say it that is the end of it. If he did say it the very statement proves the author to be a Hypocrite and false".--We think we agree.

was an abolitionist and politically they had nothing in common; (3)Seward stated his opposition to the Act in the Senate: (4)Dixon would naturally suspect such a proposal from a Northern Whig; (5)the entire business would be foreign to Dixon's whole life and character.

As already stated, the generally accepted view of the reason for Douglas' part in the passage of the Bill, interprets it as a bare-faced bid for southern support for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1856. This was the opinion voiced immediately and repeatedly, in and out of Congress, during the debate. This is the opinion expressed by nearly every writer who has since taken up the task of historian.# Such a general acquiesence in, and persistent repetition of, this assertion entitles it to careful consideration. We have seen that Mr. Rhodes and Professor T. C. Smith advocate the view, and prove conclusively that every detail of the political situation in the

See the "Appeal of the Independent Democrats in Congress" and speech by Cullom of Tennessee as examples of statements in Congress. Congr. "Globe" Ist session App. pp.539-40

For repeated accusation in contemporary periodicals see, N.Y."Tribune, Jan. 6,18,23,Feb.1, 3,13: N.Y."Times" Jan. 18,24,Feb.16,Mar.2;and "Putnam's Magazine" Sept.1854.

Other historians who take this view are: Greeley, Schouler, Nicolay and Hay, MacMaster, Von Holst, E.L.Pierce,"Sumner", H.C.Whitney, "Lincoln", H. Wilson,"Slave Power"

Democratic ranks bears out that conclusion. Professor Johnson admits (as Douglas himself did#) that the Senator was an aspirant for presidential honors, and that he was ambitious, but he is unwilling to concede that selfish motives made Douglas subservient to the South.

There is a great deal in Douglas' character to uphold this idea. By birth and boyhood training a New Englander, he emigrated as a youth to Illinois, then a frontier state. He thoroughly identified his own growth with the growth of the West and absorbed all its intense spirit of Democracy and its restless desire for rapid expansion. He early caught and always retained that vision of an ocean-bound Republic summed up in that much -abused phrase "manifest destiny". Therefore, it was quite fitting that in both House and Senate he should be made Chairmen of the Committee on Territories. He was thoroughly conversant with public land questions. Organization of the great Northwest was indeed a familiar scheme with him; it harmonized with his western Democratic creed. Several bills for this purpose had been favorably reported from his Committee, only to meet defeat. On the pther burning question of the times Douglas professed to be non-partisan. His wife was a Southern woman and a slave-holder. He often declared that the

#N.Y.#Tribune" Feb. 17,1854.

institution was a local one; to its morality and to its ultimate fate he was alike indifferent. Certain it is that he was quite unable by nature to appreciate the great ethical forcesstirring the masses at the North. To him it was simply an unfortunate element complicating the political situation.

Douglas must have been aware of the fact that the Richardson bill had failed in the Senate because of Southern opposition and that this opposition was due to the reason that the Missouri Compromise made the territory in question free soil "forever". Senator Atchison, the only Southerner to support the measure, had said in his speech that the Illinois Senator had been well aware of his previous opposition to ths bill. This same speech was a plain indication that the radical Southern element had been discussing the possibility of the Repeal of the Compromise. Yet Douglas had not a word to say about repeal during this debate. He seemed definitely pledged to oppose it. Speaking in support of the fifality of the Compromise of 1850 he had declared his determination never to make another speech on the slavery question.# Three years previous he had characterized the Missouri Compromise thus: "It had an origin akin to the Constitution,and--is canonized in

Congr."Globe" 1851-2 p.68.

the hearts of the American people as a sacred thing which no ruthless hand would ever be reckless enough to disturb."# Apparently in the month of March 1853 he had seen no new light. During the next nine months no utterance of his hints at the idea of repeal and in a long letter written to intimate friends a few weeks before the opening of the new Congress,@ in which he details the important legislation he expects will be considered, there is no mention of the repeal. Then why should he have seen the light so suddenly between the time the Dodge Bill went to his committee and the day that he reported his substitute with its repeal by "subtle indirection"?% In the light of the above explanation it would seem natural that if the proposition of incorporating the repeal of the Missouri Compromise then occurred to him or if it was suggested to him, presidential aspirations working so much in harmony with a desire to promote his party's unity, would be sufficiently strong to

Nicolay and Hay,"Lincoln" vol.I p.334.
@ quoted by P.O.Ray,"Repeal of the Missouri Compromise" p.106.
% New York "Tribune" Feb.3,1854 says editorially,"Douglas had no other motive (than ambition) to remodel his well-matured last year's bill. No new circumstances connected with the territory have arisen. The bill was satisfactory; it passed the House and Douglas himself declared that on the last day of the session, if he could bring it to a vote he was sure it would pass."

cause him to adopt the plan if he could advocate it consistently. The doctrine of non-intervention was his opportunity; it was soon to become his shibboleth. We need not accuse him of insincerety. When ambition and conviction can walk hand in hand, each may greatly strengthen the other. Certainly his conviction as to the gospel of non-intervention came more into evidence as he took each successive step toward the passage of the bill. Not until the last day of the great debate did he coin the phrase later so dear to his heart---"popular sovereignty". Years later when ambition's whispers were proven futile, he succeeded (reluctantly, it is true,) in subordinating, for the safety of the Union, his conviction as to his great principle, sufficiently to advocate again the very compromise he was now attacking.

It seems justifiable to conclude that political ambition was the dominating consideration that induced Douglas to advocate the repeal measure; a measure not contrary to any deep personal conviction; a measure that could be passed under this new Democratic doctrine of non-intervention; a measure whose true inner significance the Senator failed to comprehend. Once his great energies were bent on the struggle, increasing efforts in behalf of the measure brought increasing conviction.

"That the repeal of the Missouri Compromise in 1854 had its real origin in western conditions and particularly in the peculiar political conditions in Missouri, and that the real originator of the repeal was David R. Atchison" is the contention of Professor P. Orman Ray.# Dr. Ray's book, a splendid example of historical method, is the most recent single volume devoted to this subject. His unqualified statement of his important conclusion challenges a careful estimate of the evidence he has to support it. Therefore it is necessary to consider this book at length. What follows is a summary of his account.

As far back as 1848 the Democratic Party in the State of Missouri had been split into two rival factions. The radical Calhoun secessionist and slavery element was lead by David R. Atchison. The conservative unionists were lead by Senator Thomas H. Benton. In 1848 the anti-Benton faction succeeded in passing through the state legislature the "Jackson Resolutions" favoring the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and threatening revolt at Congressional interferance with slavery in the territories. Benton appealed to the people against these instructions and from this time on there was no compromise between the opposing forces.

"The Repeal of the Missouri Compromise; Its Origin and Authorship." P.O.Ray (1909)p. 233.

As early as 1844 Benton had spurned the suggestion of Judge Price urging the repeal. When the General Assembly met in 1850-51 the hopeless division of the Democrats enabled the Whigs to elect Geyer to the Senate of the United States.

Thus after thirty years service Benton was forced into retirement. Rejecting all offers of reconciliation, the old Colonel set his heart on regaining his seat in the Senate by replacing Atchison in 1854. The remarkable campaign of the spring of 1853 is only the culmination of his efforts to secure his restoration. And it was this struggle that led to the Repeal.

One of Benton's most effective weapons was his project of a "Great National Highway to the Pacific." In both 1849 and 1850 he had introduced bills for a railroad to the coast over a central route from St. Louis. For the next two years he was inactive in the matter. Therefore when he again championed the measure his enemies said it was for electioneering purposes. An essential part of his plan was to so associate the organization of Nebraska Territory and the Pacific Railroad, in which every Missourian felt a direct interest, that to the popular mind the former would seem indispensible to the success of the latter.

Senator Atchison had already explained his position, as in favor of a Pacific Railroad over some route to be selected by the President after proper surveys, before Benton took up the agotation for the two schemes immediately after Congress adjourned in March 1853. His advocacy of the railroad project revakened interest in the organization of Nebraska. The citizens of Platte County in western Missouri petitioned Congress for immediate action. Under the ostensible leadership of the Wyandot tribe the Indians in the territory, seeing a prospective rise in land values, choose one, Abelard Guthrie, as their delegate to urge the matter on the attention of Congress. The two factions in Missouri soon succeeded in dividing the allegiance of the Wyandots, and in August 1853 the Atchison wing elected Thomas Johnson as delegate in place of the Benton nominee, Guthrie.

The attitude of Atchison toward the organization of Nebraska had been far from consistent. As early as December 1852 Guthrie had reported that the Senator demanded the repeal of the Missouri Compromise before anything should be done for Nebraska.# But Benton's agitation had been so successful that his rival was forced to a realization of the fact that the people of western Missouri strongly favored the

Ray, p.89.

quick action on the opening of the territory to settlement. Acceding to their wishes, he reversed his former position and spoke in favor of the Richardson bill since he saw "no hope for the Repeal".# This speech of his was important as indicating,(1) that the possibility of a repeal had been seriously considered and(2) that, should it ever be possible, then Atchison would champion it if need be.

The conservative faction made great political capital out of this change of attitude. Put on the defensive by Benton's stand for organization, Atchison was forced to declare a position harmonizing (1) with his former pro-slavery speeches and the wishes of his pro-slavery constituents,and (2) with the desire of the populous western section of his state for early organization. Therefore, for a third time, he took a new stand in a speech in Platte County in June. "I will support a bill to organize a government for the territory upon condition that such a bill contains no restriction upon the subject of slavery, and not on

Judge Price said in this connection: "Judged by his remarks in the Senate March 3,1853, it seems that Atchison had not kept fully informed of the growth of a strong sentiment in the western part of the state for immediate repeal, which developed rapidly after he had left the preceding November. At any rate that sentiment apparently did not seem in March to him to be strong enough to warrent advocating the Repeal. Quoted by P. O. Ray, pII4.

any other conditions. I am willing that the people who may settle there and who have the deepest interest in this question should decide it for themselves. I say emphatically, that I will not vote for any bill that makes Nebraska a free soil territory."#

Thus it is that the issue between the two opposing elements of Missouri Democracy becomes the repeal or the retention of the Missouri Compromise in the next session of Congress; and Atchison is forced into the championing of the repeal when the contest shall, of necessity, reappear at Washington.

Benton had made one mistake. In May 1853 he had visited Atchison's stronghold in the western counties of the state and had seen the impatient demand for occupation. So to steal any possible thunder from his opponent,he had proclaimed the right of the whites to settle in Nebraska in spite of Indian Treaties. A controversy with Atchison ensued in which Atchison's friend Mannypenny, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, rightly gave his official decision against Benton's contention. As a result the Benton newspapers charged that his failure to negociate any treaties was due to his pro-slavery sympathies and to his partianship with that faction in Missouri; also it was claimed that while in the territory,he worked

#"Missouri Republican"June 22,1853;quoted by Ray,p.135.

actively among the Indians in behalf of Tom Johnson, Atchison's nominee for delegate. But Mannypenny's instructions show that his visit was only intended to be a preliminary one.

The interest in organization found in Missouri was nearly equaled by that found in Iowa, where the stimulus was the intimate relation of the new Territory to the Pacific Railroad. Of course, the slavery question which profoundly complicated the situation in Missouri, did not enter here at all. The people of Iowa even went to the extreme of crossing into the Territory, holding an illegal election, and sending Hadley Johnson to Washington to work against Tom Johnson. This Iowa interest, added to the demand in western Missouri and among the Indians, demonstrates that the question of organization could not be further posponed and was bound to come before the Committee on Territories of which Douglas was chairman.

In the foregoing account of the origin of the demand for organization, with or without repeal, the name of Douglas has not been mentioned. In spite of his boast to the contrary, the Illinois Senator maintained an apathetic attitude on the Nebraska question between 1848 and 1853. We have no record of any efforts on the matter by Douglas during these years. On this point Professor Fay takes such a direct issue

with statements of others,(for instance,Dr. Johnson says that Nebraska was a hobby with Douglas) that it is worthwhile to see the proof he gives for his point in the following review of Nebraska legislation prior to 1854.#

(1) Original suggestion found in Secretary of war Wilkins' report November 30,1844 which resulted in the introduction by Douglas of a Nebraska Bill in the House conforming to these recommendatios.

(2) A second bill by Douglas introduced into the Senate, March 1848; the incentive for this was a memorial from the people of Missouri.

(3) In December 1849, the third,and last bill introduced by Douglas until 1854.

(4) The Hall Bill of December 1851: and the Hall Bill of Feburary 1853. Hall was from western Missouri and a supporter of Atchison.

(5) The Nebraska Bill of December 1853, introduced by Senator Dodge of Iowa. Also the similiar measure in the House introduced by Miller of Missouri.

This review shows that the interest in the subject in Congress comes from Missouri and Iowa, where considerable enthusiasm had been aroused by thr Pacific R.R.

P. O. Ray, p. 95.

Project; Douglas was not especially concerned. Indeed he was in Europe from May to November 1853, and in all probability was unaware of the development of the Nebraska question and the repeal agitation until shortly before the opening of Congress. Certainly, in his confidential letter to Lamphier and Walker there is no mention of Nebraska, squatter sovereignty, or the applicability of it to the Missouri Compromise. Then when and by what means was the proposition of the repeal forced on the attention of the "Little Giant"?

David Atchison made the assertion that he originated the repeal and forced it on Douglas. This is the conclusion that Professor Nay reaches. Two sorts of evidence are produced to prove the point, circumstantial and direct. The circumstantial evidence on what was taking place outside the Senate between December Fourth and January Twenty-third is drawn from the testimony of Washington correspondents of the great newspapers. In the absence of conflicting data and because it fits the facts so far presented wonderfully well, it carries considerable weight. We note from these sources the following points.

1. In support of the point already definitly established, every newspaper that discussed the question, assumed that the problem before Congress was the direct result of the peculiar political mix-up

in Missouri.#

2. Atchison and Douglas were close friends; and Douglas disliked Benton against whom he had made campaign speechs in Missouri on behalf of Atchison. "The bill will pass. It is obviously the plan adopted by the Atchison party to this dispute, because Atchison and Douglas are inseperable friends. Richardson in the House is an ardent personal friend of Douglas and perhaps hates Benton as much as either that Senator or Atchison."@

3. In the accounts of the conferences and meetings held between these eventful dates, the name of Atchison is always linked with that of Douglas. Along this line we have an additional bit of testimony which evidently escaped Professor Fay,--the direct statement of Mr. Philip Philips, a member of the Committee on Territories%. This view of the bill, (that as reported by Douglas on January 4th it did not repeal the Missouri Compromise) I communicated to Senator Hunter and others and on the following day,

The list is tto long to give in full. "Propositions are being laid before the Committee by outsiders."-Missouri Republican,Jan.7. "It seems that Mr. Atchison of Missouri will move the Repeal"-N.Y.Journal of Commerce,Dec. 15,1853 and Jan6,1854. The bill is assented to by Atchison"-Baltimore Sun,Jan.6. For further review of this evidence see pp.200-202-Fay.

@ Missouri Republican, Jan. 6,1854.

% Lachlaster, vol.VIII p.195,note.

meeting Vice-President Atchison, he said to me,'Senator Hunter tells me you say Douglas' bill does not repeal the Compromise Act. This surprises me.' On my reply in the affirmative he requested me to meet Mr. Douglas in the Vice-President's (his own) room the following morning, which I did. I then had a conference with the mess occupying at that time a house in the rear of the patent-office, It was composed of Vice-President Atchison, Senators Hunter and Mason of Virginia, Butler of South Carolina, and Coode, Representative from Virginia. I consulted some others, names not now remembered. There was a general concurrence in the propriety of the repeal. On Saturday I informed Douglas of that concurrence.-------
About nine o'clock Sunday night we met at the house of the mess. Mr. Douglas called his carriage and took up Mr. Atchison. The rest of us followed on foot" Here is evidence we have no reason to doubt,revealing Atchison's keen interest in the repeal and his active backing of Douglas, even to the use of his room for secret conference. The "mess" referred to are frequently linked together in the newspaper accounts.

4. Another contributing consideration mentioned by Ray is the opportunity offered to Douglas by the championship of the Repeal. Atchison had asked to have a bill brought in with the Repeal or else to have

the chairmanship of the Committee for himself in order to introduce it. Assent by Douglas would mean the chance to aid a personal and political freind, the great opportunity to put Southern Democracy under obligation to himself in the next presidential campaign, and a convenient way to extend the popular sovereignty doctrine so much favored in the West and by Douglas; also tere was the possibility of uniting the New York Democrats on the Compromise of 1850 as a test of fidelity. Consent spelled one road to the Presidency: refusal meant resignation from the Committee on Territories. Each by the arrangement would get what he desired; Atchison would force Benton to take a fatal step, and Douglas would gain the glory and credit which he coveted.

5. "Benton's speech in the House against the bill seemed on fire with an all consuming egotism, mainly anxious to crush his enemies; his words were wafted on the sirocco breath of haughty dogmatism and an intense political hatred." #

This review of the circumstantial evidence clearly points toward Atchison as playing a leading role in inducing Douglas to incorporate the Repeal in his new bill. Let us examine the direct statements of the case.

Wilson, The Slave Power", volume II p. 398; not quoted by Ray.

I.In a speech delivered at the town of Atchison Kansas, September, 1854 and reported in the Parkville "Luminary", Atchison said that he had pledged himself to fight for the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and that in a private interview with Douglas he had told the latter what he desired and that he would like to be Chairman of the Committee on Territories to introduce the measure. Douglas after being granted a day to consider the request, signified his intention of reporting such a bill. Many writers have discredited this statement because Atchison was to all appearances drunk when he made it,and because Douglas made an apparent denial of the story. At best it is the word of Atchison against the word of Douglas, with the following considerations greatly aiding the former's contention. Every bit of circumstantial evidence as to the political situation and motive lends truth to such a statement. If Douglas agreed to do as Atchison asked, it would naturally be on condition that he be allowed full credit for the measure and that Atchison should remain silent. When a man is intoxicated he is most apt to let out unconfortable truths, that, when sober, he is bound as a gentleman to keep secret. Certain it is, that Atchison was sober in Febuary 1856 when,in a speech at Platte City, he said: "I told the people of this state that unless

the compromise restriction was repealed, I would see them dammed before I would go for it. Well, it was done. I do not say that I did it, but I was a prominent agent." A careful consideration of the denial made by Douglas in the Senate brings out several points of weakness. It did not come until nineteen months after the speech made by Atchison and then at a time when the Missourian was not a member of Congress. Douglas was generally conceded to be exceeding clever in resorting to quibbles and evasion. He would have sufficient to adopt these tactics in this instance. Professor Ray makes it clear that such an explanation is more than probable.#

The direct statement of Atchison is further supported by an article published with the sole purpose of assigning to him the origin of the Repeal. Colonel John A. parker of Virginia, writing in the "National Quarterly Review" of July 1880, says: "The primary object which induced the initiation of the measure to repeal the Missouri Compromise was to secure the election of Atchison. The author of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was not Douglas, but Atchison and three other able and distinguished Southern Senators." The

See pp. 285-287. It is worth noting that Nicolay and Hay writing in 1890 accepted Atchison's account of his agency in the repeal and quote at length his first speech, but make the odd statement that it was never denied by Douglas. -----"Lincoln"p.349.

account of political events leading up to, and after the Bill, given by Parker, is accurate in every instance which we can verify. There seems to be nothing in his life or character to throw a shodow of a doubt on the reliability of his statement.#

Parker did not name the "three other able and distinguished Southern Senators" who co-operated with Atchison. But another bit of entirely independent evidence, recently discovered, corroborates his statements and does give names. Shortly after the passage of the Act, The Honorable Francis P. Blair of Missouri delivered a speech in that State; in the course of his remarks he asserted that Douglas did not deserve the credit for the origin of the legislation.@ Atchison with the aid of Mason and hunter of Virginia, and of butler of South Carolina, originated the Repeal. Again, in a letter to the "Missouri Democrat" March I, 1856, Mr. Blair alludes to the fact that these four dictated the Act. It is interesting to note that Mr. Blair's account agrees perfectly with the account in the Philips' manuscript which we have previously quoted. %.

See Ray pp.264--274. At the time of the passage of the Bill, Parker was librarian of the House of Representatives.

@ Printed in a phamphlet, 'A Statement of Facts and a Few Suggestions in Review of Political Action in Missouri." (1856)

% George W. Atherton, President of Pennsylmania State College, in a letter dated August 19 1904,

We have now completed the summary of the most important evidence in support of Professor Ray's contention. We feel that he is quite justified, in the absence of any contradictory testimony, in concluding that the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise was embodied finally in the Kansas-Nebraska Bill at the wish and direction of David R. Atchison. Dr. Ray has built up a strong case on circumstantial evidence and then backed it by three direct, mutually independent statements. Each step is supported by details of minor significance and by accurate referances to his sources. Completeness, consistency, and the absence of conflicting evidence, are three tests which his work stands relatively well. It is worthy of mention that one historian writing fully of this period accepts Ray's work as reliable.#

"Absence of contradictory evidence" does not prevent diametrically opposed views, however. In a brief address on "The Genesis of the Kansas-Nebraska Act", delivered as recently as 1912,@ Frank Heyhood Hodder denies the validity of Professor Ray's conclusions. Mr. Hodder advances the theory that the one

---

wrote, "The South proposed and insisted on the repeal and selected Senator Douglas as their fitting instrument. My informent was C. J. Faulkner then in Congress." Ray p.274.

See Footnotes to MacMaster Vol.VIII, p.193.

@ "Wisconsin Historical Society proceedings, 1912, pp.69-86.

dominating consideration Douglas was anxiety to secure a Northern Pacific Railroad. We have seen that Dr. Johnson suggested this explanation several years before the piblication of P. O. Ray's monograph. In this most recent article, the suggestion becomes an assertion, supported by little new evidence.#

According to Hodder, the Kansas-Nebraska Act was the resultant of four distinct elements. The first and most important, was the agitation for a transcontinental railroad that had begun with Whitney's project in 1845 and had speedily increased in vehemence and in sectional bitterness. The second element was the difficulty of organizing this region because of the opposition of the slave states to more free territory. Yet no organization meant no northern route for the railroad. Another element was the local agitation that grew up in Iowa and Missouri for organization for the express purpose of furnishing a route for the railroad. The fourth element was the result of the third,--the demand within the territory itself on the part of the Wyandot Indians and other tribes who figured that with the terminus of a railroad near them, they could get high prices for their lands.

J.A.Barrett and A.E.Sheldon of the Nebraska Historical Society, writing in the Omaha "Bee" June 5, 1904, cover this same ground.--see Ray, p.238.

In the above explanation there is nothing new; Professor Johnson established the same points and all of them are doubtless correct. Nothing in them so far in any way conflicts with the opinion of Ray or other writers. But Hodder misstates what he has proved. "This summary of the elements that entered into the passage of the Act discloses that at every point the purpose was to secure a norther route to the Pacific." // In reality, all that is disclosed is that the Pacific Railroad was the motive behind the introduction of a bill such as the original Dodge Bill for the organization of the territory. Thus stated no one disputes the point.

Mr. Hodder attempts to prove more than this. At the outset, he says: "Professor Ray supports the untenable theory that the Kansas-Nebraska Act was the work of Atchison. The force of Atchison's drunken speech is broken by his later utterances. It was Dixon who forced the direct repeal. Atchison was allied with the Calhoun wing of Democracy and would not have fathered a bill which assumed to establish popular sovereignty. As will appear later, Dodge of Iowa was the associate of Douglas in the passage of the Act." @ There are objections to this statement. First, Ray did not claim that the Act was the work of Atchison;

// Hodder, p.76.
@ Hodder, p.73, note.

he did claim that the suggestion for thr repeal clause was made to Douglas by Atchison. Second, this claim in no way interferes with the truth of the statement that Dixon forced the direct repeal. Third, as to Atchison not fathering a bill which assumed to establish popular sovereignty, we quote again the Senator's own words; "I will support a bill to organize a government for the territory upon the condition that such a bill contain no restriction upon the subject of slavery. The people who settle there should decide it for themselves."# Finally, in regard to Douglas and Dodgeas associates, no testimony is brought forward.

The little evidence produced to substantiate the claim that the Pacific Railroad was the dominating motive with the Illinois Senator in this matter, is inconclusive.

(1)"As early as 1845, Douglas had prepared a bill for the organization of Nebraska and for a land grant for a Pacific Railroad." But this bill was a purely perfunctory fulfilment of two such suggestions which had been contained in the Secretary of War's recent report. As Chairman of the House Committee on Territories, the task devolved upon Douglas as routine duty.

(2) "Above all things Douglas was interested in the railroad development of the West. In 1850 he

See page 27 of this Thesis.

he carried through the land grant of the Illinois Central." This piece of legislation had its origin entirely in the peculiar political and commercial situation within the State of Illinois.# And in any case, such an argument carries little weight when we recall that during this decade of extraordinary expansion, there was scarcely a Congressman from the West or the South who failed to urge three or four state railroad bills.

(3) "The whole history of the discussion after 1850, indicates the co-operation of Douglas and Dodge of Iowa." The only scrap of evidence to support this assetion is as follows: "March 17, 1852, a bill was introduced by Jones of Iowa and amended by Dodge, providing land grants for two state railroads in Iowa; and about a month later Douglas introduced a bill for an overland emigrant route and telegraph to the Pacific." This is slight basis for indicating co-operation of Dodge and Douglas when we have so much more direct and convincing testimony of the intimate relations of Atchison and Douglas.

(5) "Commissioner Hannypenny, while in the territory, consorted with Southern men and returned without negociating any treaties, reporting that they could be secured in the following spring, at which

Johnson,"Douglas" p.168-169.

time it was expected that the Southern Pacific Railroad would be definitely located. Douglas realized thatif anything were done to prevent it, it must be done quickly." In the first place, the Commissioner was not directed to negociate treaties; secondly, if this were his real reason for delay it would not have escaped the Benton press, so keen in bringing every possible charge against him; and lastly, Johnson said that Manypenny's scheme was devised to aid the St. Louis route, rather than the Southern.

(c) "The act was passed chiefly in furtherance of the project for a Chicago and Iowa route, but if that purpose were alleged at the time, it would have prevented its passage. Douglas could not have admitted his real motives in the divided condition of his own State; nor could he have gone before the nation as a candidate for the Presidency and have explained that the Act generally accepted as a concession to the South, was in reality, intended to sacrifice the Southern to the Northern Railroad interests." Is it imaginable that the Senator would would have received any hotter reception in his home State if he had declared these truly loyal motives? Would he not have spared himself nation-wide vituperation and endless explanations by asserting such a purpose? #

On the contrary, at the State Agricultural

Mr.Hodder has failed to support his position by evidence either sufficient in quantity or convincing in quality. We must reject his main contention as an"untenable theory". To accept it, we should be required to accept too many other improbable correlaries. It requires us to suppose that Douglas had this in mind a long time, and that during the advocacy of the Richardson Bill and during Atchison's speech,and even while writing his letter to Lamphier, he kept it as a deadly secret, unexplainable even to those who would most benifit by it; that all Southern statesmen were so dense as to fail to discern and mention this true reason in the long debate; that Douglas preferred to go to the grave without declaring such a relatively commendable motive for his most criticized act, even to his father-in-law.#

A thorough review of the secondary material and an independent investigation of sources has been made with the purpose of discovering some definite evidence of the exact relationship of the Pacific Railroad to

---

Fair he said,"I have been Chairman of the Committee on Territories for the past ten years, and it was my duty to act in this matter and bring forward this bill. I was no volunteer. It devolved on me as a duty."--Missouri Republican,Oct.6,1854.

See skeleton account given by J.M.Cutts, "Douglas"p.91. Note that it would, however be possible to reconcile the theories of Ray and Hodder, thus,--that the desire for a Northern Route was the dominating motive that accuated Douglas in incorporating the repeal urged on him by Atchison.

the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. We have combed the files of newspapers and periodicals, searched through many speeches of Gongressmen and the records of Southern Commercial Conventions, and examined special works on the history of transportation, without bringing to light new facts. The general history of the trans-continental railway project and the growth of sectional rivalry for the location of the line, has been well related.# It would be irrelevent to go over the story in connection with this paper. Having established the fact that at that time no direct connection between the Repeal Clause and the Railroad was considered vital enough for comment, it is improbable that more can be said than is contained in the following general conclusions.

In the session of the Thirty-third Congress, (1851-1853) the Paific Railroad was the absorbing topic of debate. The country was happily united on the necessity for some road, but hopelessly divided on its exact location. The decade 1850-1860, which was the "storm and stress" period of the history of the trans-continental railway, was also, politically,

For excellent account of the Railroad and sectionalism see, J.P.Davis, "The Union Pacific Railway" Chapter III. Other good works are Congressional History of Railways," by L.H.Haney; "Origin of the Pacific Railroads" by Edward Hayes. See classified bibliography for a complete list of material covered in investigating this question.

a bitter struggle between freedom and slavery in the very territories to the settlement of which the road was to give its greatest impetus. It is not surprising, then, that economic rivalry and the vigilance of the slave interests whittled down the Rusk and Gwin Bills of 1853 to mere appropriations for surveys of various routes. It was fully expected that the question would be a major consideration in the next Congress. But the moment the proposal of the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise came up every other issue was obscured by the intensity of the slavery issue. The passage of the Act and the consequent bitter struggle for Kansas served to augment a hundred-fold the acridity of sectionalism. Therefore the possibility of agreement in Congress on one route, so improbable before, was now quite out of the question. In this sense the Kansas-Nebraska Bill killed the Pacific Railroad. Two significant facts support our point. First, whereas before 1854 each bill in Congress proposed one road or one road with branche lines, the bills after this date provide for the construction of two or even three distinct lines. Secondly, whereas Southern Commercial Conventions previously had called on the Federal Government to build or aid a road, from now on, the prevaling sentiment in their resolutions is for a road built by Southern corporation or by an

organization of the Southern States, independent of national aid or action. The Act, by fanning anew the flames of controversy, destroyed the possibility of unified action on the plan for a Pacific Railroad, which was its raison d'etre, according to some authorities. Not until the South had withdrawn from the National Legislature and military necessity became the dominent consideration, did the Union Pacific bill pass in 1862.

The foregoing account has aimed to be an inclusive and fair presentation of the forces behind an epoch-making piece of legislation. We beleive that it has demonstrated:(1)the very importance of the problem renders it complex, and this complexity is increased by lack of documentary evidence,(2) that, consequently one explanation can not claim to contain the whole truth, (3) each however contains a measure of truth, and (4) the essential truths of each, when combined, supplement rather than contradict one another, and thus rearranged give a fairly adequate explanation of the problem. Therefore, we venture to state by way of summary what seems to be a reasonably correct history of the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

The force behind the original bill, introduced by Senator Dodge, was the same force that was behind the Richardson Bill of the previous session,--namely,

the desire to open the way for a Pacific Railroad. This was, without question, the motive which actuated the Iowa Senator in bringing forward the bill which contained no mention of slavery.

This Dodge Bill, as a matter of course, went to the Committee on Territories. Chairman Douglas during the next few weeks decided to report a substitute bill embodying the repeal of the Missouri Compromise by indirection. The suggestion for this new move, in all probability, came from Senator Atchison who was pledged to secure the repeal and whose political future depended on his sucess in so doing. Senator Douglas accepted his suggestion mainly because it seemed an easy and harmless way to gain Southern support for the Presidential nomination in 1856. Incidentally, it was rendered more attractive still to him as party leader because it promised to produce party harmony and to be a practical example of the good western Democratic doctrine of "popular sovereignty".

After the bill was introduced with the indirect repeal Senator Dixon offered his amendment putting the repeal proposition in unmistakable language. He took this action on his own initiative because of his sincere beleif in the institution of slavery. Douglas was confused by this forcing of his hand; but he had

gone too far to withdraw. After frequent conferance with the big men of his party and the administration, he incorporated the substance of the amendment in his Bill.

The division of the territory into two parts was done because it proved satisfactory to all concerned. The Northwest thought two territories gave an equal chance for both central and northern railroad routes. The South thought the division would make it much easier to gain Kansas as a slave state.

The passage of the Act was due to three things; the unified support of the South, the tremendous pressure brought to bear on Northern Democrats by the President, and, most of all, to the wonderfull personality, parliamentary skill, and courageous leadership of the man whose name is forever associated with the measure---Stephen A. Douglas.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Note: The following list contains all the material consulted in preparation for this thesis, together with the exact number of pages covered in each case. Caution: comments which are made apply to the work considered from the standpoint of this special topic, rather than from the standpoint of their general value.

Bibliographies Consulted.

American Nation Series; Volume I8; Index Volume.

Cambridge Modern History; Volume VIII.

Guide to the Study of American History; by Channing, Hart and Turner

Card Catalogue; Boston Public Library.

List of Books Relating to Railroads; Compiled by A.P.C.Griffin, Librarian, Congressional Library.

Newspapers and Periodicals.

New York Tribune. (I850--I855)
Contains excellent editorials.

New York Times.
(I850--I854)
Contains valuable digests of the proceedings in Congress from day to day.

Democratic Review. (I853--I854)

Southern Quaterly Review. (I853--I854)

Hunt's Merchants' Magazine. (I849--I854)

Putnam's Magazine. (I853--I854)

De Bow's Review. (I846--I855)
The best source for Southern viewpoint on all economic and political question. Especially good on the Railroad question.

General Secondary Works,

"The Constitutional and Political History of the United States" by Dr. H. Von Holst(University of Freiburg)
Vol. IV; Chapters VI,VII,VII.
Callaghan & Co.,Chicago. (1885)
Sympathy with the North; severe on Douglas.

"History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America." Henry Wilson. Vol.II, Chapter XXX.
J.R.Osgood & Co.,Boston. (1874)

"Memoir and Letters of Charles Sumner", by Ed. L. Pierce.
Roberts Bros.,Boston. Vol.III,Chapter 30.

"Life on the Circuit with Lincoln." by Henry C. Whitney.
Estes and Lauriat, Boston. (1892) pp.380--I

"Abraham Lincoln, A History",by John G. Nicolay and John Hay. Vol.I, Chapter XIX.
Century Co.,New York. (1890)

"Stephen A. Douglas; A Study in American Politics."
Allen Johnson. (Yale) Macmillan Co., N. Y. (1908)
Read entire; studied carefully Chapter XI.
The best biography of Douglas; excellent in general, but not exhaustive on this particular point. View summarized in the text of the thesis.

"Parties and Slavery, 1850-1859." by Theodore T. Smith.

Volume 18 of "The American Nation, A History."

Harper & Bros., N. Y. (1906)

Read entire; studied carefully Chapter VII. Not very full in discussion of our subject. Quoted at length in the text.

"History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850." by James Ford Rhodes.

Harper & Bros., N, Y. (1893) Vol.I Chapter V.

Good detailed account of the Bill in the Senate but not exhaustive in analysizing the forces behind it. Reviewed in the text.

"A History of the People of the United States, from the Revolution to the Civil War." John Bach McMaster.

D.Appleton & Co.,N. Y. (1913) Vol.VIII,pp.192-199.

Special Secondary Works.

Kansas-Nebraska Act.

"True History of the Missouri Compromise and Its Repeal."

Mrs. Archibald Dixon Robert Clarke Co., Cincinatti

pp. 417--620. (1899)

Read entire. Gives long extracts from the debates in Congress and the vote on the Bill. Strong Southern Prejudice; view and criticism in text.

"The Repeal of the Missouri Compromise; Its Origin And Authorship." P. Orman Ray.(Penn. State College) Arthur H. Clarke Co.,Cleveland. (1909) pp.287

Carefully studied entire. Good example of a Doctor's Thesis in History; a scholarly piece of work in both attitude and general arrangement. See text.

"The Genesis of the Kansas-Nebraska Act."
Frank Haywood Hodder.
Article in the "Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, at Its Sixtieth Annual Meeting Madison, 1912." pp.69-86

An address which is not full enough to establish its author's point. Reviewed in the text.

"A Brief Treatise on Constitutional and Party Questions, and the History of Political Parties, (as I received it orally from the late Senator S.A.Douglas)."
J. Madison Cutts, Colonal, U.S.A.
Appleton & Co. (1866)

Read entire; very unsatisfactory on this subject.

Pacific Railroad Project

"History of the Union Pacific Railroad." Henry K.White University of Chicago Press Economic Studies.(1895)

Deals but briefly with the period before 1862.

"The Union Pacific Railway; A Study in Railway Politics, History and Economics." John P. Davis.
Griggs & Co., Chicago 1894. pp.9-97

Careful, critical history; the most valuable reference. Excellent bibliographical footnotes.

"Congressional Grants of Land in Aid of Railroads."
J. B. Sanborn (Phd. Thesis)
Madison, Wisconsin (1899) pp.62-63

Very brief on this point.

"History of Northern Pacific Railroad."
Eugene V. Smalley. G. P. Putnam's Sons. N.Y. 1883

Not scholarly; very unsatisfactory. pp.91-106.

"Origin of the Southern Pacific."
Edward Mayes Publication of Missippi Historical Society. 1902

A good general account.

" A Congressional History of Railways in the United States to 1850." Lewis H. Haney.(Phd.Thesis)
Bulletin of University of Wisconsin, No.211 (1906)

Book III (pp.386-433) on Railways to the Pacific is good for the legislative history of early projects.

Documents, etc.

Congressional Globe (1832--1854)

A Collection of Pacific Railroad Phamphlets.

Boston Public Library.

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
1 1719 02574 7306